

Appl. No. 10/076,198
Amdt. dated November 10, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 10, 2004

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. Claims 2, 4, and 14 have previously been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 3, 16, and 17 have been amended herein. Thus, claims 1, 3, 5-13, and 15-17 are presently pending, with claims 1, 16, and 17 being independent.

Applicant wishes to express its appreciation for the interview conducted on November 10, 2004, and thank the Examiner for her time and consideration given during that interview. It is noted that claims 1, 16, and 17 and proposed amendments to those claims were discussed during the interview. Moreover, it was agreed that the proposed amendments would overcome the prior art rejections based on the Stich '381 patent, as presented in the Action of August 10, 2004.

Applicant further notes that none of the prior art references of record, when considered singly or in combination, show or suggest the use of the structure recited in amended independent claims 1, 16, or 17. Therefore, the independent claims should be allowable. Furthermore, claims 3, 5-13, and 15 depend from claim 1 and recite additional features of the invention not shown or suggested by the prior art references of record. These dependent claims should also be allowable.

Applicant also notes that claim 3 has been amended herein to change its dependency from claim 2 to claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the § 112, ¶ 2 rejection of claim 3 be withdrawn.

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In view of the foregoing, the present application should now be in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned at (800) 445-3460.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

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(Docket No. 32274)

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